

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman:
Tsunetaro Miyakoda

*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

Editors:
Kaname Tsukahara
Peyton Palmore III

CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2, 4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ¥1,000; Foreign (Sea mail) \$3.00; (Air mail) \$3.00, plus additional postage.

No. 66

August 1, 1955

In These Pages

Visitation Evangelism.....1	New Christian Hospital.....3
Teachers' Training Conference..2	Drs. Morris and Levett.....3
Baptist Convention.....3	Christian Writers' Workshop..4

VISITATION EVANGELISM - a movement catching on fire

Gathering from August 2-4 at the Amagi-Sanso Baptist Assembly Grounds, approximately 250 Christian "volunteer visitation evangelists" shared together their experiences and gathered inspiration to continue their difficult but significant work for Christ. The Assembly Grounds were packed to capacity as delegates from 95 churches in all parts of Japan along with three pastors representing the churches of Okinawa, discussed their experiences, problems and laid plans for the future.

Although there was a keynote address and inspirational addresses, the heart of the conference lay in the panels and personal witness of the lay evangelists themselves. These dedicated people make great sacrifices in order to do their volunteer work. The two most prevalent difficulties they meet are lack of understanding in their own families and difficulties caused by their jobs. (1) Most of these workers come from non-Christian families. In this case, it is very difficult for the families to understand why the lay evangelist must spend so much time away from home. Even when the family is sympathetic to the work, it is often difficult for them to sacrifice the presence of the worker from the home. In order to meet this difficulty, many of the workers have worked out elaborate and strictly adhered to schedules of time. Several samples of these schedules were mimeographed and found enthusiastic support and welcome. This careful stewardship of time seems to help alleviate the problem to some extent.

Many volunteers found great difficulty in maintaining the standard six day fifty hour work week, give the necessary time to the volunteer evangelistic work and still do efficient work for

their employer. In addition to the strict scheduling of time mentioned above, some have found opportunities to change jobs and work for an employer some sympathetic to their driving interest in evangelism. When such is possible, it has proven a great boon to their efforts.

The Homon Dendo (visitation evangelism) movement has the backing of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), the Christian Centennial Commission, and the National Christian Council. Begun five years ago at the Reinanzaka Church in Tokyo by the Co-Pastor, Rev. Ryukichi Yoshida, the movement has experienced phenomenal success locally and has spread to other Christian churches throughout the country. Last year at Gotemba the first annual Visitation Evangelism Conference was held with 150 delegates attending. This year over 60 had to be turned away for lack of facilities, and plans are being made to host several hundred next year. An earlier conference held in May this year for just the Kyushu area attracted 120 volunteers and their pastors.

A record of 2.5 new converts each year has been achieved by these volunteers. Nearly 100 new members have been received each year by the Reinanzaka Church in Tokyo where the number of lay volunteer visitors has increased from the original 5 to the present 62. Nearly 200 Christian churches throughout Japan have organized and trained local Homon Dendo groups in the past three years.

TEACHERS' TRAINING CONFERENCE - "Doers of the Word"

The fifth annual National Leadership Training Conference, sponsored by the N.C.C. Church School Department, was held at the Hoshino Hotel, Kutsukake, July 25-28. There were 200 persons in attendance, including 175 Church School teachers from 70 different churches throughout Japan and 25 conference leaders. A recurring emphasis throughout the conference was expressed in the opening orientation lecture by Rev. Takihiro Yamakita on the conference theme, "The Church School and Church School Curriculum Responding to the Problems of Today." Said Mr. Yamakita, "We Christians are being criticized because we are hearers of God's word and not doers. We must know the needs of the world, and we must respond to them."

Other significant lectures were given by Dr. Senji Tsuru, the chairman of the Revision Committee of the Bible Society ("Present-Day Studies of the Old Testament"), Dr. Takuo Matsumoto, Professor of Aoyama Gakuin University and member of the Bible Revision Committee, ("Personalities in the New Testament"), and Professor Kazo Kitamori of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary ("Theology and Christian Education").

Specialized areas related to the work of the Church School were presented by Mr. Mathew Ogawa of AVACO ("Audio-Visual Education"), Rev. Isamu Mitsui of the Ginza Church ("The New Hymnal"), and Rev. Norimichi Ebizawa of the N.C.C. Literature Commission ("Church Education through Literature").

All conference delegates had an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences in the various discussion groups on the themes, "How to Make the Bible a Light for Daily Living," and "The Responsibility of the Church School to the Present Society."

BAPTIST CONVENTION - to send Japanese missionary to Okinawa

The ninth annual meeting of the Japan Baptist Convention meeting the 27-29th of last month, voted to send Rev. Masamichi Shirabe, Pastor of Numamoto Baptist Church, as a missionary to Okinawa to set up a church there. The ¥800,000 budget will be met through offerings which will be taken in connection with the Japan Baptist Prayer season which will be held from November to December this year.

It was also decided to start pioneer evangelism in the following five places: Hakodate, Tokyo-Shinjyuku, Gifu, Tottori and Kawasaki. Three new churches became members of the Convention at this meeting.

192 representatives from 60 churches meeting at Amagisanso Izusan re-elected Rev. Buntaro Kimura (pastor of Hiroshima Baptist Church) as President of the Convention, and approved a work budget for the headquarters of ¥68,700,000., and also the budget for construction of schools, churches and hospitals.

Dr. C.F. Clark was elected Chairman of the commission which will officially compile a Baptist Hymnbook. Although a new hymnbook was compiled and published by the Japan Hymnbook Commission at the end of last year for the general use of churches in Japan, it was felt that a specially compiled one would be more suitable for the use of the Baptist Church in Japan.

NEW CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL - dedicated by Baptists in Kyoto

The dedication ceremony for the Japan Baptist Hospital held in Kyoto on the 11th of July was attended by about 200 guests. Rev. S. Yuya, the chairman of the Board of Hospital Evangelism made the dedication address. The governor of Kyoto Prefecture, the Mayor of Kyoto city and others as well offered their congratulations.

This hospital was opened in January of 1954 but the present building was later built at a cost of ¥51,000,000. It now has 78 beds and the hope is that in the future they can enlarge to more than 130 beds.

DRS. MORRIS AND LEVETT - educational evangelists complete tour

The Drs. Levett and Morris have just completed a three month evangelistic tour of this country. Using colored films and other audio visual equipment, they travelled nearly 5000 miles (mostly

by car) to hold about 90 meetings. At most of the meetings an opportunity was given to confess Christ as Savior. In all, almost 1,000 of the estimated 50,000 people addressed publicly responded.

Dr. Levett, who is a singing evangelist, and Dr. Morris, who is a preaching minister, felt that their chances to speak in high schools and colleges was the most vital part of their ministry here.

CHRISTIAN WRITERS' WORKSHOP - another milestone for Christ in Japan

For the first time in Japan, Christian writers from all over the country gathered together for the express purpose of studying and discussing methods, materials and purposes of writing Christian literature. Meeting at the Kutsukake Hoshino Spa from July 8 - 30th, more than 80 men and women devoted their days to listening to lectures and participating in small group discussions.

An indication of the content of the lectures may be gained from the following list of speakers and their subjects: Dr. Minoru Toyoda - "Christian Thought in English Literature"; Mr. Kōjiro Serizawa (a novelist) "Life and Literature"; Prof. Tomokazu Sasabuchi - "Modern Japanese Literature and Christianity"; Prof. Bunnosuke Sekine - "Wording and Sentence Construction"; and Mr. Hirabayashi - "Poems and Literature in Denmark".

The evenings were given over to group discussion in three divisions; Fiction, Evangelistic Literature, and Children's Literature.

The conference, which was sponsored by the NCC Literature Commission, was judged to have been of unparalleled value in stimulating these writers to produce the seed which will bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

